



GREATER HEALTH GREATER GREEN TRIANGLE

University Department of Rural Health

Strategic Plan 2005-2008

Networking for Greater Health

A Flinders University and Deakin University Partnership



Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing



Introduction

Greater Health (the Greater Green Triangle University Department of Rural Health) is part of the Australian Government's UDRH program and brings together major academic institutions, health agencies, professional organisations and community groups in a venture to promote "Greater Health" in the Greater Green Triangle region.

The Department undertakes an integrated program of research and development, education and training to provide information for improved management and decision-making. During its five years of existence, the Department has profoundly influenced the national agenda for health. In 2006, the Council of Australian Government (COAG) initiative to improve mental health led to funding of the rural mental health academic post for each UDRH in Australia. This work was lead by this Department. In 2007, COAG announced a \$200 million initiative to prevent diabetes. The component aimed at reducing the risk of people progressing to diabetes was based on the Greater Green Triangle Diabetes Prevention Program, which was completed in 2006. This national demonstrator has led the way internationally in the area of diabetes prevention and is the result of the bilateral collaboration with the National Public Health Institute of Finland. For the last four years the National Public Health Institute of Finland has provided public health specialists to lead our Public Health program. The result of that partnership has been a report identifying the risk factors for chronic diseases, including heart disease and diabetes prevalence in the Greater Green Triangle region. It is the first report of its kind in rural Australia and will provide the basis for future prevention programs.

Over the five years the Departments clinical placement program has grown from strength to strength and the infrastructure for student accommodation and support for clinical supervisors has been developed. The Department itself has grown from one base on the Deakin University Campus in Warrnambool to three with a second at the Hamilton Hospital and a third office at Mt Gambier Hospital.

A three-way partnership between Flinders University, Deakin University and the Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing will ensure practical outcomes and long-term benefits.



Professor James Dunbar
Director
Greater Health

The Challenge

'Greater Health' throughout the Greater Green Triangle region

Our Vision

To be recognised as a centre for excellence in rural public health, workforce and health service support.

Our Mission

To create a '*Network for Excellence*' in:

- Rural health professional education
 - Population and health services research
-

Our Core Commitments

- Recruitment and retention of health professionals through collaboration with regional health agencies and private practitioners
 - Increased student numbers on rural placement based on workforce and supervisory capacity
 - Facilitate positive experiences for students on placement
 - Excellence in teaching and supervision of postgraduate and undergraduate students
 - Increased training opportunities for health professionals and students
 - Promotion of a public health focus
 - Addressing Aboriginal health in collaboration with the Aboriginal communities of the GGT region
 - Developing, supporting and evaluating innovative models of service delivery
 - Excellence in Information Technology
 - Promotion of UDRH activities
-

Our Approach

- Quality driven
 - Health-focussed
 - Primary care-based
 - Evidence-based
 - Innovative
 - Localised
 - Networked
 - Cross cultural
 - Interprofessional
 - Collaborative
-

Funding

Australian Government Dept of Health and Ageing:
Aus\$4.7 Million, 1 July 2005 - 30 June 2008

Greater Health will identify other sources of funding necessary to meet its objectives and to ensure long-term viability.

Program Overview

The Australian Government Dept of Health and Ageing developed the UDRH program to expand:

- The rural health workforce; and,
- The communities' capacity to deal with rural health issues.

The objectives of the program will be achieved through education, research and service development and are outlined on pages 5-11.

Partnership Structure

Greater Health is a partnership between Flinders and Deakin Universities. Flinders University is the signatory to the Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing Agreement.

Board of Management

Greater Health is overseen by a Board of Management, comprising:

Professor John Catford	Dean, Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences, Deakin University (Chair)
Professor Roy Goldie	Executive Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Flinders University
Ms Diane Petchell (Proxy Ms Karen Large)	Director, Rural Health, Victorian State Office, Department of Health and Ageing
Mr Grant King	Executive Member, Limestone Coast Economic Development Board
Dr Peter Chapman	Country Division, Dept of Human Services South Australia
<i>TBA</i>	Dept of Human Services Victoria
Ms Sue Cameron	Head Speech Therapy, Western District Health Services
<i>TBA</i>	Indigenous Representative
<i>TBA</i>	Student, Faculty of Health Sciences, Deakin University
Mr Jon Coldwell	Student, School of Medicine, Flinders University

The Board of Management will be responsible for compliance with the Australian Government Agreement and will:

- Set strategic goals
- Confirm operational goals and financial targets
- Oversee the Director's performance



Objective 1: Increase and improve rural experiences including training to encourage cultural awareness and sensitivity to Indigenous health issues, for undergraduate students in the health professions.

- 1.1 Promote the value of rural practice and rural clinical placements to all undergraduate and postgraduate health professional students placed in the GGT region.
- 1.2 Promote **Greater Health** as an organisation which exists to support students, academics, clinical supervisors and health services by providing high quality rural clinical experience.
- 1.3 Develop partnerships with rural health services and partner and non-partner university schools to improve the quality of the teaching and learning environment for students undertaking rural clinical experience.
- 1.4 Collaborate with partner and non-partner universities to develop longer and/or flexible length student placements where appropriate.
- 1.5 Ensure that all students undertaking rural and remote clinical placements are provided with relevant information and/or participate in preparation and orientation programs before placement.
- 1.6 Offer cultural awareness training for all students undertaking placements in the GGT region.
- 1.7 Promote existing scholarships and other incentives to increase equity between rural and urban students.
- 1.8 Maintain a positive teaching environment by enhancing the skills of clinical supervisors; fostering evidence-based clinical settings and providing access to educational and information technology resources.
- 1.9 Undertake evaluative research designed to improve the quality of rural clinical placement for students, clinical teachers, health services and rural and remote communities.

Objective 2: Expand educational opportunities relevant to rural and remote practice, in particular in relation to existing rural and remote health professionals and Indigenous students.

- 2.1 Provide flexible access for rural and remote health professionals to high quality, relevant and responsive continuing education opportunities.
- 2.2 Provide workshops for health professionals in identified priority areas.
- 2.3 Participate in regional training provision.
- 2.4 Provide support for rural and regional health professionals to enrol in research higher degrees in partner universities and, where relevant, non-partner universities.
- 2.5 Through education encourage Aboriginal people to pursue careers in health.
- 2.6 Offer cultural awareness training for all **Greater Health** staff.
- 2.7 Offer cultural awareness training for all health service providers working in the GGT region.
- 2.8 Support the clinical practice links of **Greater Health** staff.
- 2.9 Strengthen and develop core infrastructure in **Greater Health**, in order to provide an environment that urban-based academics will find attractive and will want to work in.

Objective 3: Undertake research into rural and remote health issues, including publication of papers and reports and applying for of research grants and consultancies.

- 3.1 Recruit senior academics to coordinate research programs within **Greater Health**.
- 3.2 Participate in the Australian Government Pharmacy Academic and Rural Mental Health Academic programs.
- 3.3 Build research capacity within **Greater Health** and the Greater Green Triangle region through collaborative research with partner and non-partner universities, professional associations and local health service providers.
- 3.4 Collect and use health-related data from the region to develop evidence-based plans and create networks for improved outcomes in population and mental health.
- 3.5 Provide research mentorship, training and support to General Practitioners and other health professionals and students.
- 3.6 Secure externally-funded research grants.
- 3.7 Publish research papers in refereed journals and present at conferences.
- 3.8 Promote research scholarships in the Greater Green Triangle region.
- 3.9 Ensure that Aboriginal health issues have a high priority in the GGT UDRH by building capacity in this area through core and project funding and ensuring that Aboriginal health issues are considered in all our work.

Objective 4: Provide training and support for rural health professionals (including mentors, supervisors and preceptors), consumers and communities.

- 4.1 Establish standards and competencies for clinical supervision in collaboration with preceptors and partner and non-partner universities.
- 4.2 Collaborate with the partner universities to provide all rural preceptors with adequate training and support to meet standards.
- 4.3 Improve and maintain the clinical teaching and other skills of rural preceptors.
- 4.4 Recruit new preceptors.
- 4.5 Develop flexible learning tools for teacher and supervisor training.
- 4.6 Provide workshops for all health providers with responsibility for student supervision.
- 4.7 Increase on-line access to Deakin University and Flinders University library resources at regional campuses.
- 4.8 Develop a strong infrastructure that can provide support and mentoring for rural health professionals.
- 4.9 Develop partnerships with rural health professionals and their representative organisations in the provision of continuing education.
- 4.10 Promote GGT UDRH expertise in rural health care, education, research and practice.
- 4.11 Participate in relevant meetings and training with the Flinders University and Deakin University faculties of health sciences.

Objective 5: Contribute to innovation in education, research and service development through collaborations with universities, health services and professional and community organisations.

- 5.1 Strengthen the UDRH network.
- 5.2 Promote **Greater Health** as an organisation for supporting and evaluating innovative service delivery models, including chronic disease management, and mental health and pharmacy programs.
- 5.3 Establish partnerships with health service providers to develop strategies for attracting and retaining clinicians in the region.
- 5.4 Strengthen links with rural communities and promote **Greater Health** services.
- 5.5 Play an active role in the recruitment of health professionals in association with government, non government organisations and other agencies.
- 5.6 Develop strong alliances with the Flinders University, Deakin University and other university faculties of health sciences, through delivery of education, supervision of all higher degree students and health professionals, and other means.
- 5.7 Ensure a coordinated response to Aboriginal health problems by developing partnerships between Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, mainstream health services and academics.
- 5.8 Develop an innovative model of a distributed, embedded network-based management structure that enables staff to be located at the most appropriate sites within the region and still participate fully in all activities of **Greater Health**.
- 5.9 Establish a whole of region approach to education, research and service activities within **Greater Health**.

Objective 6: Embrace a strong public or population health focus; and contribute to the development of innovative service delivery models in rural and remote health.

- 6.1 Establish a demonstrator project based on a strategic partnership between Flinders University, Deakin University, the National Public Health Institute of Finland, our communities and health service providers.
- 6.2 Seek to continue work in the area of diabetes prevention on a state-wide basis through partnerships with the Victorian Government, Diabetes Australia – Victoria and other institutions and organisations.
- 6.3 In collaboration with health professionals, academics and communities develop models of operation for identified population health priorities.
- 6.4 Collect and use health-related data from the region to develop evidence-based plans and create networks for improved outcomes in population health.
- 6.5 Develop partnerships with health service providers in order to strengthen their public health activity and hence ensure that service activity includes a public health focus.
- 6.6 Provide public health information in the support programs for all students.
- 6.7 Deliver workshops on relevant health topics for preceptors and local health providers.
- 6.8 Partake in the development and support of health service evaluation programs.
- 6.9 Develop innovative models of service delivery within allied health.

Objective 7: Endeavour to progress the rural health agenda within the medical faculty and with other university departments to maximise the efficient use of resources provided for a range of rural health programs. These programs include, but are not limited to, the Rural Undergraduate Support and Coordination program and the Rural Clinical Schools program.

- 7.1 Collaboration and partnership between **Greater Health**, the Faculty of Health Sciences at Flinders University and the Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences at Deakin University, the State Departments of Health (South Australia) and Human Services (Victoria) and the Divisions of General Practice in the region.
- 7.2 Adopt a leadership role and promote rural health issues within the partner university health faculties.
- 7.3 Develop innovative service delivery models that promote equity between rural and urban academics, whilst simultaneously promoting collaboration.
- 7.4 Strengthen partnership arrangements with Flinders University's Rural Clinical School and Deakin University and Flinders University Health Science Faculties, including opportunity for con-joint appointments and teaching.
- 7.5 Collaborate with local clinicians to support discipline-specific programs, including the Pharmacy Academic and Rural Mental Health Academic programs.



Contact *Greater Health*

Hamilton Office:

PO Box 283
Hamilton VIC 3300
Phone: +61 3 5551 8444
Fax: +61 3 5571 2141

Mt. Gambier Office

PO Box 3570
Mt Gambier SA 5290
Phone: +61 8 8726 3999
Fax: +61 8 8723 6301

Warrnambool Office:

PO Box 423
Warrnambool VIC 3280
Phone: +61 3 5563 3315
Fax: +61 3 5563 3144

Web: www.greaterhealth.org
Email: ggtudrh.info@greaterhealth.org